

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended is respectfully requested. Claims 4-7 are currently pending in this application, Claim 1 having been previously withdrawn from consideration, and Claim 7 having been added by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to; the specification was objected to; Claims 2, 3, and 5-6 were rejected as being unpatentable over Ohtsuka et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,162,740) and Claim 4 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter. In reply, a separate letter requesting entry of a drawing sheet is filed herewith, adding the element 1e in figure 1. No new matter is added.

The specification has been amended as requested, changing the term "pings" to - pins--.

In response to the rejection over Ohtsuka et al, the subject matter of Claims 2 and 3 have been combined into new Claim 7 (original Claims 2 and 3 having been canceled). Claims 5 and 6 have been amended to depend from independent Claim 7.

Claim 7 is directed to a ferrule comprising plural rows of fiber holes for insertion of optical fibers formed at predetermined intervals. Each row has a plurality of fiber holes, and each fiber hole has a guide hole portion of a minute hole portion whose inside diameter is smaller than that of the guide hole portion. Furthermore, the ferrule includes pin holes for insertion of guide pins in a plurality of fiber holes for insertion of optical fibers formed between the pin holes. An opening communicates with each of the plurality of fiber holes and through which an adhesive for securely adhering the optical fibers in the fiber holes is injected.

The ferrule according to the present invention makes it easier to insert optical fibers into fiber holes in plural rows. In particular, in the ferrule according to Claim 6, as an example, each of the fiber holes has a tapered guide hole portion which allows an optical fiber to be inserted smoothly.

In contrast to the invention defined by independent Claim 7, Ohtsuka et al does not disclose a ferrule having plural rows of fiber holes. Furthermore, the guide hole portions in Ohtsuka et al are shaped like a half truncated circular cone and therefore are tapered. However, when inserting optical fibers, the respective ends of the optical fibers point in random directions. Hence, the guide holes of Ohtsuka et al cannot guide the ends of the optical fibers surely and smoothly.

In view of the above comments, it is respectfully submitted that Ohtsuka et al does not teach or suggest all the elements of independent Claim 7. As a consequence, it is respectfully submitted that Ohtsuka et al does not render obvious the invention defined by new Claim 7, nor the invention of Claims 5 and 6 which depend from Claim 7.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 4-7 is patentably distinguishing over the prior art. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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